The Scope of *Toposcope,* 1970-2014. An Eastern Cape (South Africa) Historical Journal.

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Abstract

Toposcope, the official organ of the Lower Albany Historical Society, under-publishes topics of wider than the immediate Zuurveld historical interests despite repeated calls for more contributions of such nature. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence that contributions of trans-border scope greatly enhance the advancement of history of transcultural reach. Certain prejudices need to be removed for this journal to make further constructive contributions to positive historical debate in the public domain.

1. Introduction

The misconception about the study of history is that it is often perceived that one has to have a good memory about the past since the study of history, it is commonly believed, is loaded with facts, and more specifically, with facts and dates about the past. Whilst a good memory about past facts, dates and events are certainly integral parts of the study of history, historical research is much more than this.

For instance, in the 1930s Max Horkheimer made a clear distinction between traditional and Critical Theory and promoted the important role that future historical research would play in interdisciplinary social research.[1] Likewise, another German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, wrote in the mid-1960s about history with practical intent[2] and H.E. Stolten recently explained how he has '… chosen to study the South African situation from a historiographical angle [...] and how leading social scientists have tried to change it.'[3] Therefore, one can today confidently argue about history as critical social theory with its normative, yet objective and empirical character. Serious historical study is not only about the recording and re-recording

[1] See Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays.*
[2] Habermas, J. *Theory and Practice,* p.1.
[3] Stolten, H.E. 'History and Ideology in South Africa – The Intellectuals and the Struggle for Equality.' (Paper presented at Centre for the Study of Equality and Multiculturalism, University of Copenhagen (CEMES), 11 February 2011), p.2. See also Stolten, H.E. 'Global Support for South Africa during and after Apartheid: How a History of Nordic Solidarity was Created and Used by Social Movements and Governments.' (Paper prepared for the conference, *Africa in World Politics*, The University of Texas, at Austin, 25-27 March 2011), pp.1-45.

of past and or present facts – in fact, good scholarly historical writing never practiced only such.

Instead of writing yet another history loaded with dates and facts, the purpose of this article is rather to analyse the methodological foundations surrounding the theory of history as we encountered it over a period of about forty five years in *Toposcope.* In a sense, this article is an essay about the coverage of 'the intellectual progression'[4] of 'the history of ideas' as represented by contributions to *Toposcope's* throughout the above period. The discussion therefore points at the rich potential of *Toposcope* to further contribute to stimulating new approaches in historical research of the Eastern Cape's regional history. Since the actual history of The Lower Albany Historical Society and that of *Toposcope* were dealt with before,[5] another overview of such histories are excluded herein. Naturally, when a journal is institutionalised, not only does it communicate submitted research findings, but it also furthers the philosophy, aims and visions of the association to which it is affiliated. Such relationship is therefore seamless. In this respect, a journal is in reality both the preserver and producer of history. Consequently, *Toposcope* is no different. Our view is that *Toposcope* is a valuable driver that enhances history as critical social theory in our efforts to shed light on how we made (and still make) our past and presents world/s.[6] Its value lies in responding to the historical experience of the day.

Some fundamental questions are to be kept in mind if one wants to achieve the objectives as set out for this article. For instance, are we dealing with the *facts* of history, the *theory* of history, the *method* of history, the *philosophy* of history or are we confronted with a combination of these epistemological issues? Elsewhere I have argued about the importance of both fact and theory for historical knowledge[7], but in addition, have no problem to concur with Karl Popper that knowledge in general and historical knowledge in particular, also progresses through relevant conjectures and refutations.[8] Secondly, it is no mean feat, as linguists will remind us, to 'go into the mind' of any writer who placed certain demands on the functions of their historical interpretations and selections which the readers need to contend with. Such was not an objective for this investigation. Thirdly, in order to do justice

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[4] Wells, H.G. *The Outline of History. Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind From Primordial Life to Nineteen-sixty,* p.4.

[5] For example Callow G.V. 'Lower Albany Historical Society Forty Years On: September 1957 to September 1997', in *Toposcope,* Vol.XXXIX, 1998, p.7.

[6] See for instance Lefebvre, H. *The Production of Space*; Engelbrecht, C. 'The Politicking of Space and a Local Museum.' <independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers> August 2013, pp.1-16; Engelbrecht, C. 'The Politics of Space and Notes on a Gated Community in South Africa.' <independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers> February 2014, pp.1-27.

[7] See for instance Engelbrecht, C. 'Limitations in History. Part 1. The Problems With Historical Facts.' <independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers> June 2013, pp.1-12; Engelbrecht, C. 'Limitations in History. Part II. Theory and Eastern Cape Historical Research.' <http://independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers> June 2012, pp.1-12.

[8] Popper, K.. *Conjectures and Refutations. The Growth of Scientific Knowledge,* p.xi.

to this undertaking, one needs to carefully study the contributions to *Toposcope* in an effort to reach respectable (balanced) research outcomes. Then, of course, as is the case with all research, one needs to start and end at some point – hence the parameters for this research. The reality that no written piece is essentially ever finished, or satisfactorily completed, haunts also this limitation. This problem is compounded by the fact that '… the writing of history from a viewpoint other than our own …'[9] colours all accounts of any event, in any case. In addition, our final problem relates to one of approach: should the presentation be chronological, or by type of contribution, or by type of theoretical, philosophical or methodological approach, or again, should the approach herein be a combination of these, or more?

For our purposes, we regard the philosophy of history as the set of theoretical conceptions which the writer holds about his science, as distinct from the methodology s/he might follows when researching and writing. Our arguments are framed within the convictions of intellectual freedom to make public use of reason at free will. Against this backdrop of being liberated from authority, scholarly tests of orthodoxy will nevertheless prevail.[10] In less democratic political systems, such practice is hindered. There is an obvious difference between such and truly enlightened societies (histories). For instance, the proposed legislation regarding media freedom in South Africa, in the centenary year of the ANC, bodes no positive framework for critical writing or dialogue in an enlightened public domain. Such environment influences the politics of space in which publications find themselves.[11] A further and more recent example of the growing ANCification of South African society is reflected in the language choice of black actors in the Afrikaans television program, *7de Laan*.[12] The result is that political correctness is today central to the restructuring of the South African society. All writing, as well as museology, need to contend with such primacy of politics.

2. *Toposcope* and some objectives of the Lower Albany Historical Society

The objectives of the Lower Albany Historical Society suggest a productive framework for us to determine the explicitly stated, or implied, methodology of history as one finds it in the Society's mouthpiece, *Toposcope*. The primary aim herein is to ascertain whether submissions reflect these objectives and to understand their contributions within such

[9] Basson, A. 'Chairman's Comments', in *Toposcope*, Vol.IX, 1978, p.2.
[10] O'Hara, K. *The Enlightenment. A Beginner's Guide*, p.1.
[11] Engelbrecht, C. 'The Politicking of Space and a Local Museum.' <independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers> August 2013, pp.1-16.
[12] Verslagspan: '7de Laan dalk 7th Avenue', in *Rapport* (Nuus), 24 August 2014, p.3.

framework. These two issues are however, not mutually exclusive and give ample scope for future research.

From the very first issue, either the chairman of the Society or the editor (often both) of the *Journal*, regularly appealed to the readers for some kind of support – and rightly so – for financial and or written contributions in order to sustain continued publication of *Toposcope*. For instance, in the first issue (1970), the chairman, A. Basson, explained that *Toposcope* grew from a Port Elizabeth based publication, *Long Ago,* that was in existence since 1967 and he asked for '… the support that its members are quite able to give…'[13] He continued that '… members and any others who may be interested, are strongly urged **now** to cast about for subject matter which they think may be suitable for publication and submit it early.'[14] In the same issue, and not surprisingly, the editor said that the *Journal* will provide '… a written record of the activities of the Lower Albany Historical Society …' and that it needs the support of its members.[15] Such support, the editor maintained '… should be readily forthcoming in this area where so many of us are direct descendents of those gallant 1820 British Settlers'.[16] The history of the 1820 Settlers '… will remain our basic interest'. This request and research interests are perfectly justified since the advance of Settler history (or for that matter, *any* history) is a productive pursuit. However, and rather importantly, the editor urged the readers must not '… be too parochial in our outlook, riveting our attention only on those historical facts pertaining to the Lower Albany area …'[17] and therefore appealed for contributions (articles) '… of wider historical value.'[18] The chairman echoed this.[19]

In volume III of 1972, the editor (P. Griffiths), made at least six interesting observations about the role of *Toposcope*. Firstly, it is '… a medium wherethrough historical facts not easily available to the public are put out in journal form.' Secondly, the '… aim is to publish some of the material gathered by Mr. E. Morse Jones.' Thirdly, although '… the accepted form of *Toposcope* is mainly one of presenting accounts of expeditions and talks by our various guest-speakers at monthly meetings ... this is by no means as rigid order of procedure.' In the fourth instance, Mrs Griffiths '… would welcome contributions from any interested readers on any interesting matters pertaining to the Lower Albany District, and this does not necessarily mean only 1820 Settler history either.' Furthermore, '[h]istory is being made all the time and unless we keep recording it, it may so quickly fade and be forgotten.' Lastly, she expressed the idea '… to make this journal a more lively and vital piece of

[13] Basson, A. 'Message from the Chairman', in *Toposcope,* Vol.I, 1970, p.1.
[14] Ibid. (Emphasis in original.)
[15] [Anonymous] 'Editorial', in *Toposcope,* Vol.I, 1970, p.1.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] *Ibid.*
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] Griffiths, P. 'Message from the Chairman', in *Toposcope,* Vol.I, 1970, p.1.

literature.'[20] In the same issue, the 'Message from the Chairman' was confined to mainly the restoration of Bradshaw's Mill.[21] Interestingly, in volume IV the view was put forward that '… our editorial was not necessary with every edition of *Toposcope* as this journal has become an annual reality.'[22] Again, the chairman (A. Basson) expressed a bleak view on the restoration of Bradshaw's Mill[23] primarily because of a lack of funding. In volume V, the "Editorial" called for the hope that the Lower Albany Historical Society would continue the promotion of '… ever developing more interest in, and knowledge of, our inspiring past.'[24] The same, one could argue, can be said of the *Journal*. Consequently, the chairman (A. Basson) said that in future years '… independent articles will be welcomed from members.'[25]

In terms of our objectives, we find Basson's "Chairman's Comments" in the 1978 issue, as representing a new emphasis. The following year, in February 1979, he regarded the "Coming of Age of our Society" – it would be 20 years old – seemingly, as the oldest in the Eastern Cape.[26] In this respect, he firstly referred to the "purposefulness" of the Society, and secondly, about the future '… writing of history from a viewpoint other than our own. It is notoriously true that any account of an event is heavily coloured depending on the viewpoint from which it is written.'[27] Against this background, he announced '… an essay competition for the scholars of ALL the schools in Lower Albany, black and white.'[28]

These views are of great importance against the subsequent and wider, liberal/radical historiographical debate about South African history as it unfolded since the early 1970s but faded at the end of the century. The importance of the editor and chairman's views, were, at least, in their intent – the extent to which they were followed in practice, is a matter for further debate. Per implication, the editor and chairman both alluded to the need for non-Eurocentric historical writing. In historiographical debates between different historical schools in South Africa, the historically disadvantaged sections of the population were often portrayed as being denied access to the means necessary for their writing of their history and that such was as a result and the legacy of apartheid and/or continued structural organisational inequalities in the South African society. Such views, in hindsight, can no longer hold true today.

In 1984 and 1999 readers were again reminded about the aims and objectives of the Society. Of importance for this article is '[t]he search for and collection of knowledge

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[20] Griffiths, P. 'Editorial', in *Toposcope*, Vol.II, 1971, p.2.
[21] Basson, A.S. 'Message from the Chairman', in *Toposcope*, Vol.II, 1971, p.3.
[22] [Anonymous] 'Editorial', in *Toposcope*, Vol.IV, 1973, p.2.
[23] Basson, A.'Message from the Chairman', in *Toposcope*, Vol.IV, 1973, p.3.
[24] [Anonymous] 'Editorial', in *Toposcope*, Vol.V, 1974, p.2.
[25] Basson, A. 'Chairman's Remarks', in *Toposcope*, Vol.V, 1974, p.3.
[26] Evans, F.G. 'Chairman's Remarks', in *Toposcope*, Vol.X, 1979, p.2.
[27] Basson, A.S. 'Chairman's Comments', in *Toposcope*, Vol.IX, 1978, p.2.
[28] *Ibid.* (Emphasis in original).

concerning the history …' or "[t]he dissemination of gathered knowledge" and "[t]he compilation and publication annually of the Society's magazine".[29] Such also refers to the wider history of the Lower Albany.[30]

The views of Y. Surtees in the *Editorial* of 2014 need much closer look. If one unpacks her last paragraph, the following themes stand out: that *Toposcope* does not function in a vacuum, instead it functions within the '… outlook and attitudes of the 'new' South Africa; secondly, she wrote '… there is a need to open the contents of the *Toposcope* …'[31] Clearly, (and this point has been made previously), there is an imbalance of work relating to '… the history of the indigenous people of our area....'[32] This theme is largely true of South African historiography in general and has received frequent and extensive covering in the past.[33] A secondary observation is that it is not restricted to any specific area alone. In general, criticism against the writing regional history is that it usually tends to be too restrictive – an objection rise at many forms of careless micro-histories. Lastly, the insightful inclusion of work by Edlmann and Morris respectively, underscore the importance of placing Lower Albany history is a much larger framework of analysis. In this regard, many previous publications of *Toposcope* have included contributions of trans-national importance, as summarized below.

Therefore, Surtees's call for '… subjects which might be considered 'modern' …[34] is of particular relevance. Without wanting to speculate of what Surtees had in mind, the following might prompt future 'modern' contributions: *environmental history*[35] of e.g. the Kleinemonde estuaries; *business history* of e.g. a retail or other business such as real estate agents in Port Alfred and environs that have been in operation for generations if the Lower Albany area; *gender history* is flourishing in contemporary social research – issues surrounding familial abuse; *history of delinquency* and forms of *juvenile gangsterism*; *history of the perceptions of the born free*s; *history of crime* e.g. violence at schools; *global history* and globalization[36] are

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[29] [Anonymous] *Toposcope,* Vol. XV, 1984, pp.79-80; [Anonymous] *Toposcope,* Vol.XXX, 1999, p.50.

[30] [Anonymous] 'Extract from the Lower Albany Historical Society Constitution (2002) OBJECTIVES OF THE SOCIETY', in *Toposcope,* Vol.XLIII, 2012, p.76.

[31] Surtees, Y. 'Editorial' in *Toposcope,* Vol. XLV, 2104, p.4.

[32] Ibid.

[33] See the debate for instance in Smith, K. *The Changing Past. Trends in South African Historical Writing*; Saunders, C. *The Making of the South African Past. Major Historians on Race and Class*; Wright, H. *The Burden of the Present. Liberal-Radical Controversy over Southern African History*; Legassick, M. *The Struggle for the Eastern cape 1800-1854. Subjugation and the Roots of South African Democracy.*

[34] Surtees, Y. 'Editorial' in *Toposcope,* Vol.XLV, 2104, p.4.

[35] Engelbrecht, C. 'Max Horkheimer and Environmental History. A Case for the Greater Kowie Region (Eastern Cape, South Africa).' <independent.academia.edu/christoengelbrecht/papers> January 2013, pp.1-15; Engelbrecht, C. 'Marx and Engels on "Nature." Early Beginnings of Elements of Environmental History?' <independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers> May 2013, pp.1-9.

[36] Engelbrecht, C. 'Globalization Theory and Reference to Aspects of Eastern Cape (South Africa)

probably *the* fashionable research enterprises in the world today; *labour history* has been around for a long time but new perspectives about the poorer of the poor and socio-economic-political triad, open new areas of research which are in desperate need for new perspectives; not so long ago the *history of the* black *township Alexandra*[37] in northern Johannesburg, brought new methodologies and perspectives to the fore that can successfully be used to research the history of e.g. the *Nkwenkwesie* township. Lastly, the *history of ideas*; *history as critical social theory* and the increased ANCification of society at grassroots level, would make interesting areas for investigation – of course not all related to Lower Albany history.[38] Logically speaking, some of these tie in well with *struggle history* and need not be seen as 'academic, highbrow or too difficult'. In a sense the *struggle* is after 20 years of post-apartheid living, most certainly not over: consider the current struggle of previously disadvantaged communities and previously privileged communities with poor or non-service delivery by government.[39] *Land claims* and counter claims, have a long and deep routed existence in South African society – the history of which is in need for research. Similarly, *history of the illegal economy*[40] e.g. fraud, corruption, nepotism and entitlement are 'modern' topics for investigation. An interesting and under-researched area is *litigation history*, e.g. the fact that at any given day many public officials face legal action of some kind – in other words the number of public servants being sued.

Since history of e.g. the above, are stories told in understandable, accurate and enjoyable manners – regardless of the topic, the pursuit of writing such, are the challenges all stakeholders face.

3. General impressions/characteristics of contributions

Based on a close look at the articles published since 1970, a few important points can be made. Contributions to *Toposcope* remain predominantly settler orientated, written almost exclusively by white South Africans. Calls from chairpersons, editors and a few contributors however, are all in favour for the transformation of the situation. For instance, in an article entitled 'Kowie Museum', the author wrote: '… equally events in Lower Albany are

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History.' <http://africalit.nai.uu.se/exlibris/aleph/a18> May 2011, pp.1-10.

[37] See Bonner, P. and N. Nieftagodien. *Alexandra. A History*.

[38] In fact, by means of a simple questionnaire one can quickly and accurately determine what the readers think of as being 'modern' or 'new' that could (or should) be written about. In this way one can also overcome the comments: 'Oh, our members do not read *that*' or 'No-one will find *that* interesting' or worse '*I know* want our readers read' attitude.

[39] See for instance Mc Lennan, A. and B. Munslow. *The Politics of Service Delivery.*

[40] Engelbrecht, C. 'Early Critical Theory, Racket Theory, and the Arms Deal for South Africa.' <independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers> June 2013, pp.1-59.

intimately connected with causes of effects beyond its borders.'[41] Thirdly, of particular importance for this article, are the articles of 'wider' or trans-regional scope (meaning those 'beyond its immediate borders.') As the following table shows, a very productive collection of historical writing already exists of scope wider than that of the immediate Zuurveld.[42] Such remain, however, underrepresented.

For the sake of space and brevity (as well as quick reference), I will list the most important ones chronologically (by year of publication) as follows:

Author	**Title**	**Year**
Thorpe, C.	'Missionary Pioneering in Rhodesia.'	1971
Baker, H.	'Guns.'	1972
Basson, A.S.	'Water-mills.'	1973
Josman, G.F.	'The Jewish Role in South Africa From the Beginning of the White Settlement Until 1910.'	1974
Barratt, I.	'Some 18th Century Settler Villages in USA.'	1975
Nuttal, M.	'Light on a Dark Age.'	1975
Ward, V.	'An Interesting Hobby in Hong-Kong – Archaeology.'	1975
Turpin, E.	'The Kowie and Coastal Shipping.'	1978
Maxwell, W.	'Robert Godlonton and The Graham's Town Journal.'	1979
Munro, D.	'An Introduction to Zimbabwe.'	1979
Hummel, H.C.	'Historical Preservation. Some North American Experiences.'	1983
[Anonymous]	'Plettenberg Bay Treasure Trove.'	1985
[Anonymous]	'Standardisation of Time.'	1985
Gledhill, E.	'The Processing of Wool in Samuel Bradshaw's Time.'	1986
Butler, G.	'Piles of Stone in the Veld.'	1987
[Anonymous]	'The Unknown Warrior.'	1988
Davenport, G.	'Guyuk to Kwaaihoek.'	1989
[Anonymous]	'How Nelson's Man Came to Lower Kareigha (sic).'	1989
Hummel, H.C.	'Port Alfred: The Macrocosm Touching on the Microcosm.'	1990
Davenport, T.R.H.	'South Africa's French Revolution.'	1990
Cockbain, T.G.E.	'Origins – The History of the Universe (abridged).'	1991
Clement, J.	'The Orange River.'	1991
Hummel, H.C.	'War and Peace: Port Alfred 1939-1945.'	1992
Lillie, A.	'Conservation of the Built Environment in the 1990's.'	1993
Hunt, K.	'The Rise and Fall of the Swedish Empire.'	1993
Fike, B.	'The Present and Future.'	1993

[41] [Anonymous] 'Kowie Museum', in *Toposcope*, Vol.XIV, 1983, p.49.

[42] I have not included articles of personalities nor articles that in principle fit the objectives of this article which have been published elsewhere before. Naturally, even so, not all readers will agree with my selection for the above purpose.

Cockbain, T.G.E.	'Early History of Aviation in the Eastern Province.'	1994
Twentyman-Jones, A.	'Talk on Minerals: Mark Tompkins.'	1996
Stretton, S.	'Smuts' Incursion into the Eastern Cape.' Part 1.	1996
Stretton, S.	'Smuts' Incursion into the Eastern Cape.' Part 2.	1997
Twentyman-Jones, M.	'Where do Gems Come From?'	1997
Webb, A.	'Some Lessons from Environmental History: Australia and South Africa.'	1998
Stretton, S.	'A Holistic Approach to Environmental Management.'	1998
Webb, A.	'Kimberley in the Late 1870s: Some Thoughts on the Composition of the Society and economy on the Eve of the Amalgamation Process.'	1999
Ouzman, S.	'The Archaeology of Rock-Art. Toward a Mindscape of Landscape.'	2000
[Anonymous]	'The British Settlers Introduced Building Societies to South Africa. The Story of the 'PERM.''	2000
Jones, M.H.	'Morosi of the Baphuti.'	2000
Shelver, D.	'The Anglo-Boer War. A Layman's Look.	2000
Webb, A.	'Kimberley Mining and Money on the Early Witwatersrand.'	2000
Webb, A.	'Why was England First? Some Thoughts on the Concepts of an Industrial Revolution.'	2001
Erasmus, M.C.	'Memories of 43 Air School, Port Alfred. An Empire Training Scheme Site for R.A.F Pilots During WWII.'	2002
Webb, A.	'The Ostrich in South African History.'	2002
Njobe, M.W.	'Impact of Some Historical Events on Life in South Africa.'	2003
Atherstone, W.G.	'My trip to the Diamond Fields.'	2003
Erasmus, M.C.	'A Review of Historic Events that have Contributed to the Silting of the Kowie River During the Past 150 Years.'	2003
Webb, A.	'The Rise of the Ostrich Farming Industry in South Africa.'	2003
Twentyman-Jones, M.	'Clocks and Watches in the Africana Museum.'	2003
Erasmus, M.C.	'Notes o'war. Humorous Anecdotes from the 1999-1902 Anglo-Boer War.'	2004
Webb, A.	'Towards a Theory of Fashion.'	2004
Erasmus, M.C.	'A Logical solution to the silting of the Kowie River and Royal Port Alfred Marina.'	2004
Jones, M.	'A backward Glance at the Slagtersnek Rebellion.'	2005
Webb, A.	'The Decline of the South African economy After 1970. Where does the Blame Lie?'	2005
Webb, A.	'Some Personal Observations of Changes in the Tertiary Education System over the Past Thirty Years.'	2006

Webb, A.	'Some Ideas of the Trade Union Development in Britain and South Africa and the Consequences.'	2008
Webb, A.	'Port Alfred Property Prices: Past and Present.'	2009
Collett, E.	'Son of the Settlers: Thomas Charles Scanlen (1834-1912).'	2010
Engelbrecht, C.	'Limitations in History. Part 1. Problems with Historical Facts.'	2010
Webb, A.	'Booms and Crashes: What Lessons can we Learn from a Study of the Past?'	2010
Dickason, G.	'Moving Frontiers – The Cape Colony 1652-1900.'	2011
Webb, A.	'How the Policy of Apartheid Affected the South African Economy.'	2011
Manson, A.	'Emasculating Shaka: Changing Perceptions of the Zulu Kingdom.'	2013
Masters, A.	'The Influence of the 1820 Settlers had on the Mohair Industry.'	2013
Eldmann, T.	'Acknowledging the Human Legacies of the Apartheid Era Wars.'	2014
Morris, P.	'From Beaches to Battlefields and Back Again.'	2014

Nevertheless, often the same topic received further publishing space. Such is a positive, since in most instances the follow-up is a report on progress of a project (work in progress) – continued work on Bradshaw's Mill, is a good example.

Conclusion

Since the historian is both 'maker' and 'keeper' of history, s/he cannot '… abandon philosophy …'[43], nor is '… the avoidance of any theoretical consideration of society as a whole …'[44] mutually exclusive from the '… practico-historical …'[45] desire to '… understand and change social reality […] to the right kind of society.'[46] Thus, the way in which history is communicated is not only in the weaving together of lonely facts but also the employment of consciously methodological work that is built (also) on theoretical knowledge. Let us not forget that '[t]he task of theory …' Adorno reminded us, '… is to reflect reality.'[47] The task of the historian, Walter Benjamin wrote, '… is that we can interrogate [*befraghen*] the past'[48] against its interconnectedness with the present world historical circumstances.

One such reality is that knowledge and cultural transfers are not a-normative. They take place in specific circumstances and because such continuously change, 'meanings' of

[43] Aronowitz, S. 'Introduction', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.xvii.
[44] Horkheimer, M. 'Notes on the Science and the Crisis', in Horkhemer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.4.
[45] Aronowitz, S. 'Introduction', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.xvi.
[46] Horkheimer, M. 'Preface', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.ix.
[47] Adorno, T. and M. Horkheimer. *Towards a New Manifesto,* p.2.
[48] Ferber, I. *Philosophy and Melancholy. Benjamin's early Reflections on Theater and Language,* p.115.

knowledge and culture therefore change when they are transferred. It is against the backdrop of these, that *Toposcope* is in the enviable position to further writing on 'modern' subjects '… when juxtaposed with settler stories'[49] or e.g. colonialism.[50] Its sustainability to contribute to 'the new', will depend on reallocation of scarce resources in order to give credence to previous calls for expanding horizons. There are at least three reasons for this. Firstly, chairpersons of the Society and editors of the *Journal* are in agreement for change – that decision has been made – however, expanded implementation needs to follow. Secondly, there are already commendable examples of such contributions that represent their calls.[51] Thirdly (and probably most importantly), the virtual global debates in the public domain provide exciting opportunities for such participation. The basis of micro-history and examples of accounts of wider scope that were published over the last forty five years or so in *Toposcope*, could therefore form a solid foundation for lending momentum into the 'modern' and/or 'Other.' It would reflect on the paradoxes in the structural socio-economic-political transformations in contemporary society.[52] The value of the 'trans-perspective'[53] is that it leads us away from previously held restrictive areas of focus. In 1990 H.C. Hummel wrote that Port Alfred is '… not immune from the many stresses, strains and tensions that afflicted all societies influenced by the high noon of capitalist development before it blew its fuse and plunged the globe into World War One, the world's first 'high tech' modern capitalist war.'[54]

The above implies a move away from traditional descriptions of substances inherited from subject and object, to analysing form, function and structure of relationships.[55] Furthermore, if nurtured, such contributions will emphasize the ways in which we made (and still make) our enlightened worlds.[56] In this process the relative under-representation of Africanist history[57] should receive further attention (not necessarily by whites) to address this imbalance. For

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[49] Surtees, Y. 'Editorial', in *Toposcope*, Vol.XLV, 2014, p.4.

[50] Engelbrecht, C. 'Marx's Theory of Colonisation and Contemporary Eastern Cape (South Africa) Historiography.' <http://independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers1755482> June 2012, pp.1-17.

[51] See again the table above.

[52] Honneth, A. ''Paradoxes of Capitalist Modernization." The Foundations of a Comprehensive Research Project of the Institute for Social Research.' <www.ifs.unifrankfurt.de/english/paradox.htm> 2011, pp.1-3.

[53] Tischler, M.M. 'Academic Challenges in a Changing World.' <DOI 10.1515/jtms-2014-0001> July 2014, p.1.

[54] Hummel, H.C. 'Port Alfred: The Macrocosm Touching on the Microcosm', in *Toposcope*, Vol.XXI, 1990, p.21-28.

[55] Lefebvre, H. *The Production of Space*, p.401.

[56] Engelbrecht, C. '*Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno, and Contemporary South African History.' <independent.academia.edu/christoengelbrecht/papers> May 2014, pp.1-15; Engelbrecht, C. 'The Politics of Space and Notes on a Gated Community in South Africa.' <independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers> February 2014, pp.1-27.

[57] See for instance Visser, W. 'Trends is South African Historiography and the Present State of Historical Research.' (Paper presented at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden, 23 September 2004), pp.1-19.

instance, the development of research clusters to direct research[58] rather than having to publish what is merely available, would refocus already limited research resources in a time when the disillusionment with democracy is widely debated in the public domain. We suspect, that should this not happen, society at large would 'move on' and current historical practices and perspectives will become irrelevant. In a sense then, work from '… several different disciplines, sees theory as a factor contributing to the improvement of society.'[59] In such, everyone remains his/her own historian. The most recent and relevant example of contemporary re-interpretation of today's South African history, is probably Du Preez's placing into wider context the post-apartheid trans-cultural historical developments.[60] Similarly, *Toposcope* has a role to play – the themes are endless[61] and the scope unrestricted. After all, the reality is that the '… last decades have seen considerable changes with regard to our globalizing world …'[62] and from such *Toposcope* in not immune.

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[59] Wiggerhaus, R. *The Frankfurt School. Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, p.133.
[60] Du Preez, M. *A Rumour of Spring. South Africa after 20 Years of Democracy.*
[61] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931and 1950-1969*, p.20.
[62] Tischler, M.M. 'Academic Challenges in a Changing World.' (Editorial.) <DOI 10.1515/jtms-2014-0001> July 2914, p.1.

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